

# Raising Your Own Turkeys

A large turkey with a blue and red head and a large, patterned tail fan, standing in a grassy area. The turkey is facing left, and its tail feathers are fanned out. The background shows a chain-link fence and some dry grass.

Country Living Expo & Cattlemen's Winterschool

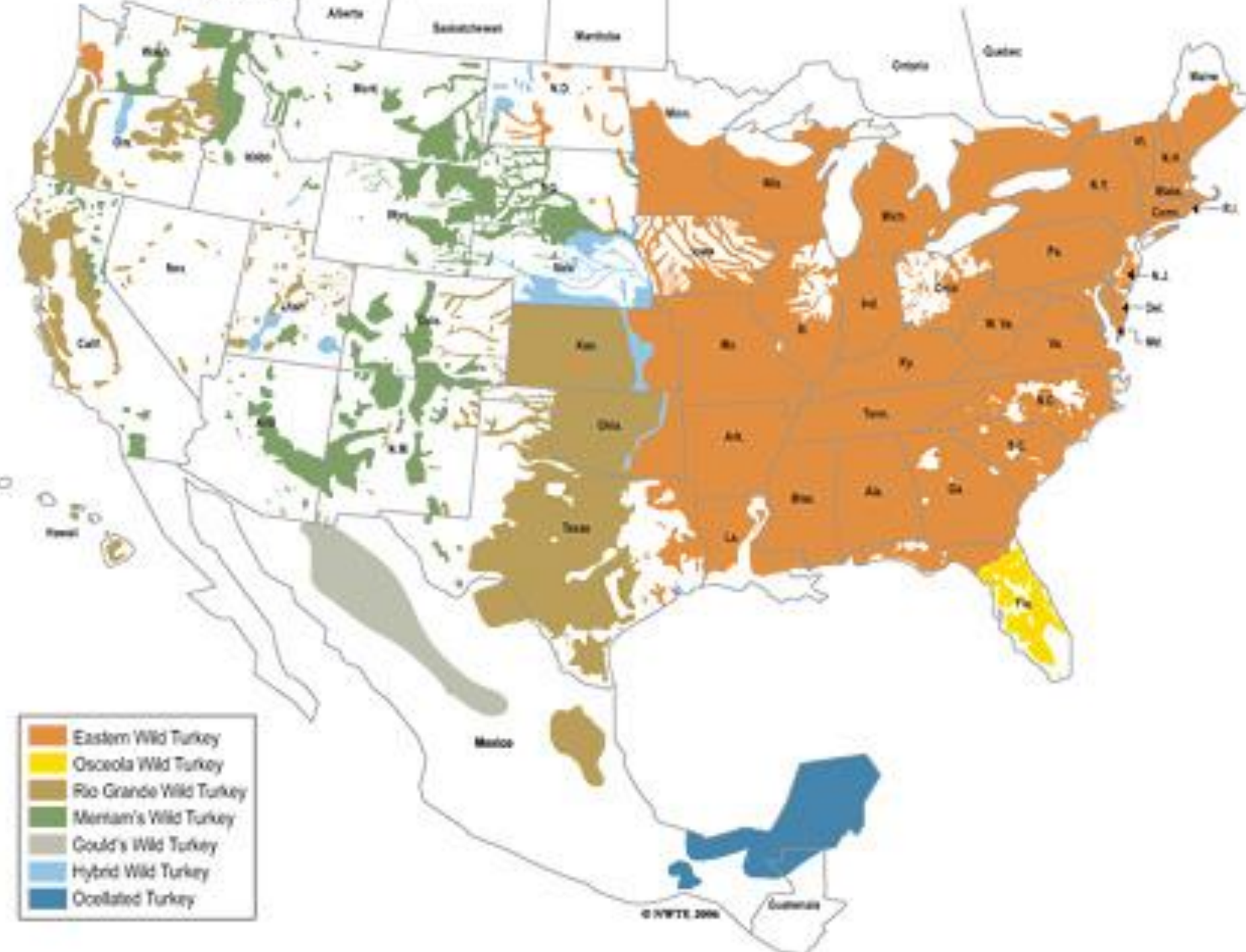
Benjamin Janicki



# Eastern Wild Turkey









Narragansett Turkey



Eastern Wild Turkey





# Modern Turkey Housing





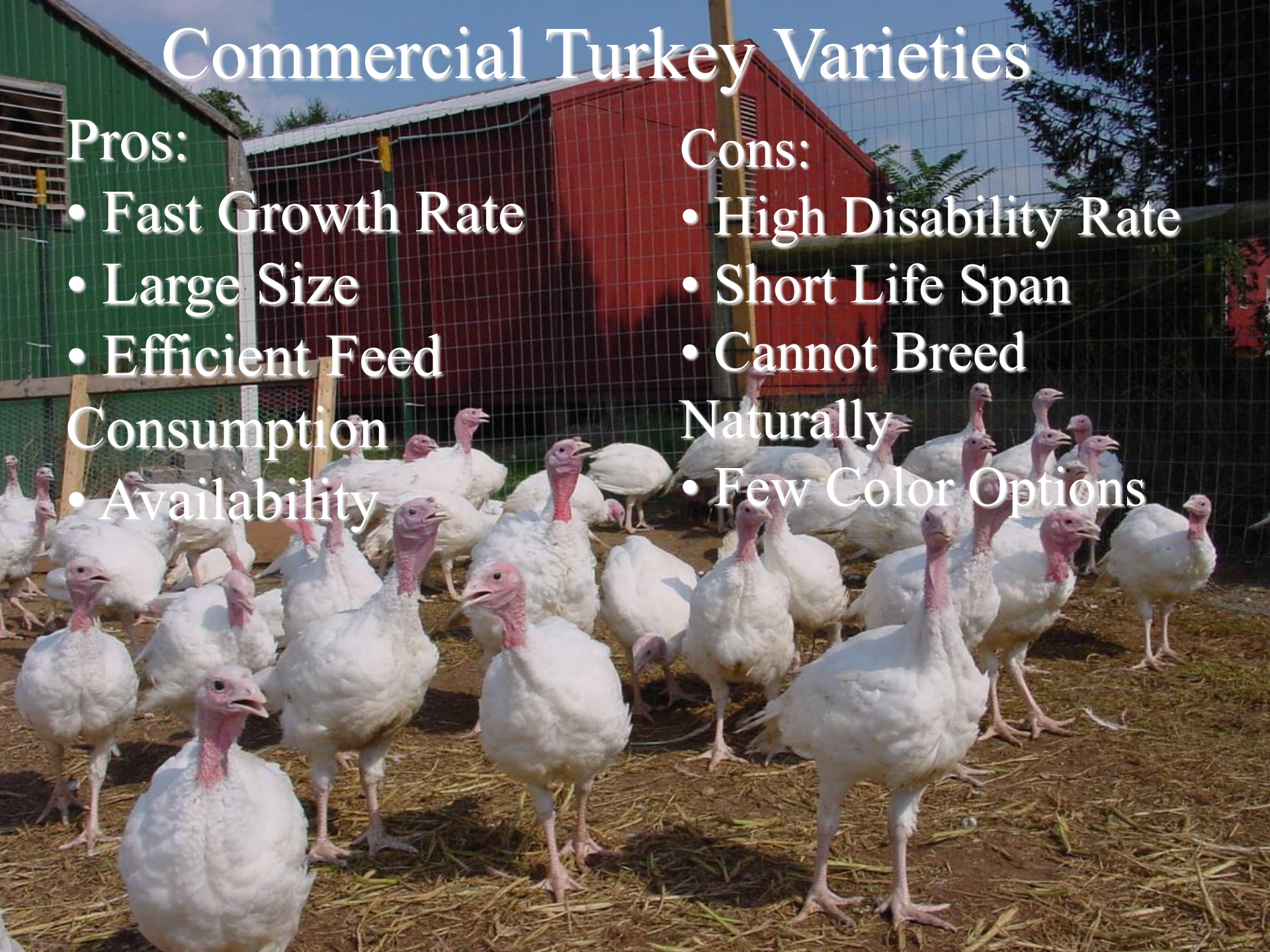
# Commercial Turkey Varieties

## Pros:

- Fast Growth Rate
- Large Size
- Efficient Feed Consumption
- Availability

## Cons:

- High Disability Rate
- Short Life Span
- Cannot Breed Naturally
- Few Color Options





# Heritage Turkey Varieties

## Pros:

- Hardy and Healthy
- Good Foragers
- Naturally Breeding
- Long Life Span
- More Flavorful

## Cons:

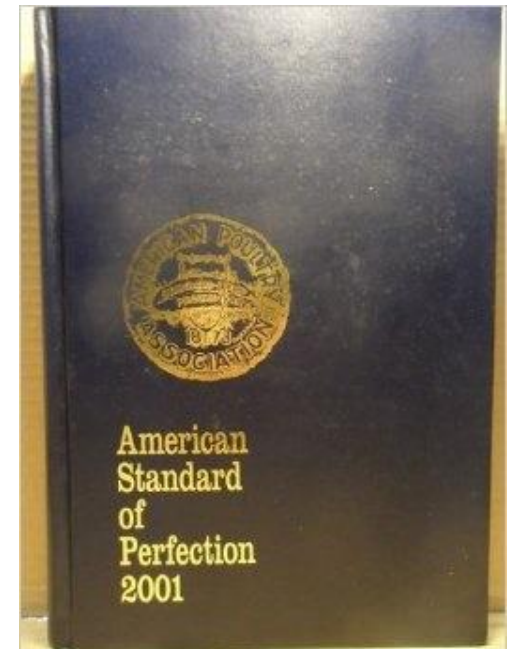
- Slow Growth Rate
- Less Available





# American Poultry Association (APA)

- First established in 1873
- Oldest livestock breed association in America
- Publishes the American Standard of Perfection





# Standard-Bred Poultry

- Bred to the standards set forth in the APA Standard of Perfection
- Most breeds are defined to be useful as well as attractive (not just for show)
- Ensures all breeders are focused on common goals
- Most Heritage breeds are Standard-Bred



# Standard Bronze









Ideal tail on right, poor tail below. Should have “double rainbow” where last two rows of tail feathers have iridescent shine.





# White Holland









# Black









# Blue Slate





Slate has one copy of the blue gene over a black base.





Self Blue





# Breeding Slate

- Slate X Slate = 50% Slate, 25% Black, 25% Self Blue
  - Slate X Black = 50% Slate, 50% Black
  - Slate X Self Blue = 50% Slate, 50% Self Blue
  - Black X Self Blue = 100% Slate
- 
- Black and Self Blue are true-breeding

Therefore, you can breed all three of these colors from a single breeding pen.



# Narragansett





# Narragansett Tom at Chehalis Fall Show 2013









Bronze on left, Narragansett on right





# Bourbon Red









# Royal Palm









# Midget White & Beltsville Small White





# Lilac



Two copies of blue over a Bronze base. True-breeding





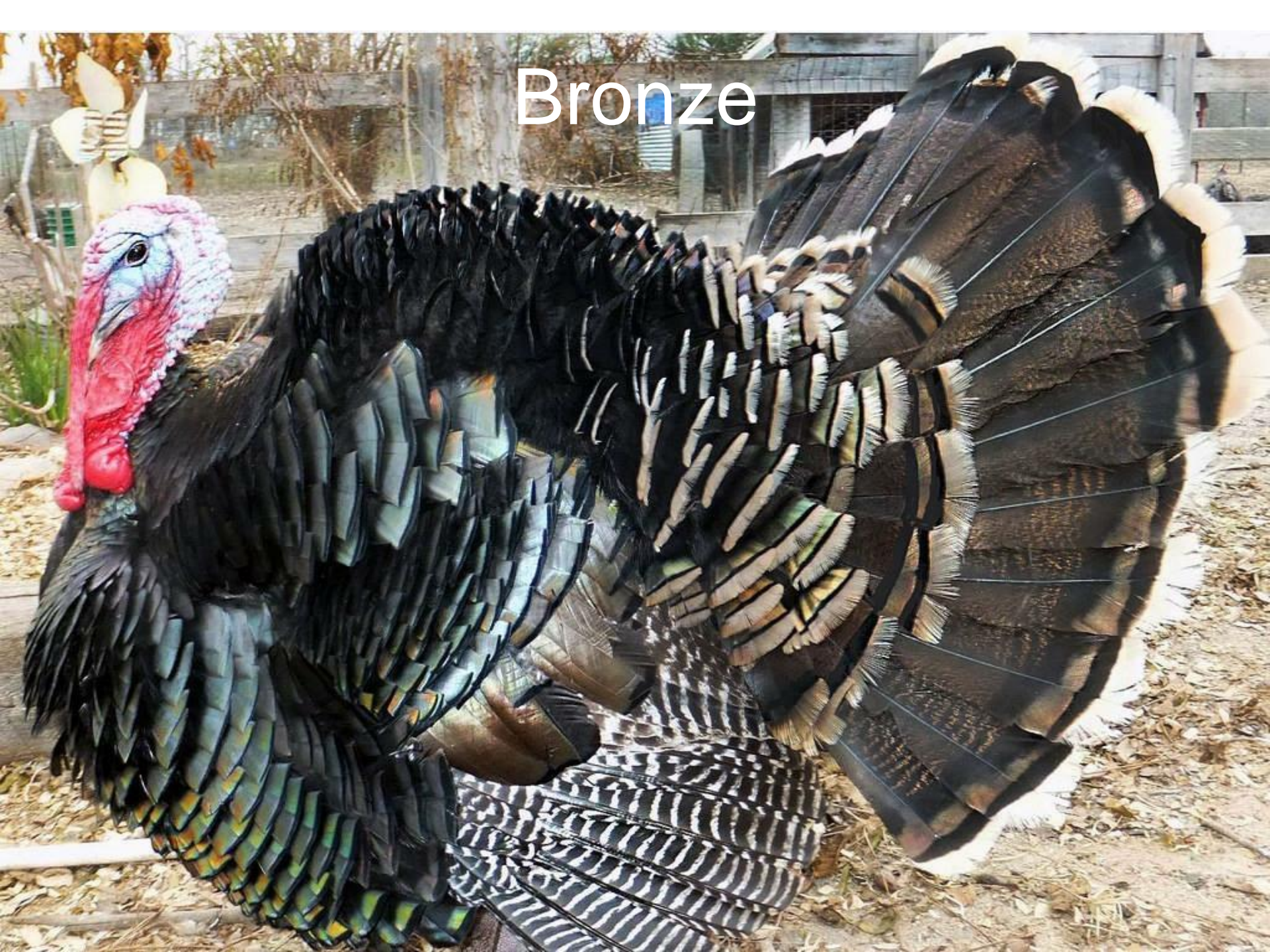
# Red Slate



One copy of  
blue over a  
Bronze base.



Bronze





# Breeding Bronze-Based Slate

- Red Slate X Red Slate = 50% Red Slate, 25% Bronze, 25% Lilac
- Red Slate X Bronze = 50% Red Slate, 50% Bronze
- Red Slate X Lilac = 50% Red Slate, 50% Lilac
- Bronze X Lilac = 100% Red Slate
- Bronze and Lilac are true-breeding

Therefore, you can breed all three of these colors from a single breeding pen.



# Poult Care

- Baby turkey poults should be kept in a draft free, predator proof pen for the first 6 to 8 weeks
- Feed poults high protein turkey or gamebird starter feed
- Place small rocks in the water for the first week to prevent drowning





- Poults are shipped in batches of 15





# Feed

- High Protein Starter Crumble
- Grower
- Layer
- Flock Maintenance
- Pellets vs. Crumbles
- Feeders
- Fresh Water



# Housing

- Should protect birds from wind, rain and sun
- Should keep birds safe from predators
- Should be easy to clean
- Should have roosts and nest boxes
- Should have place for feed and water
- Photo shows modified dog kennel





# Portable Housing

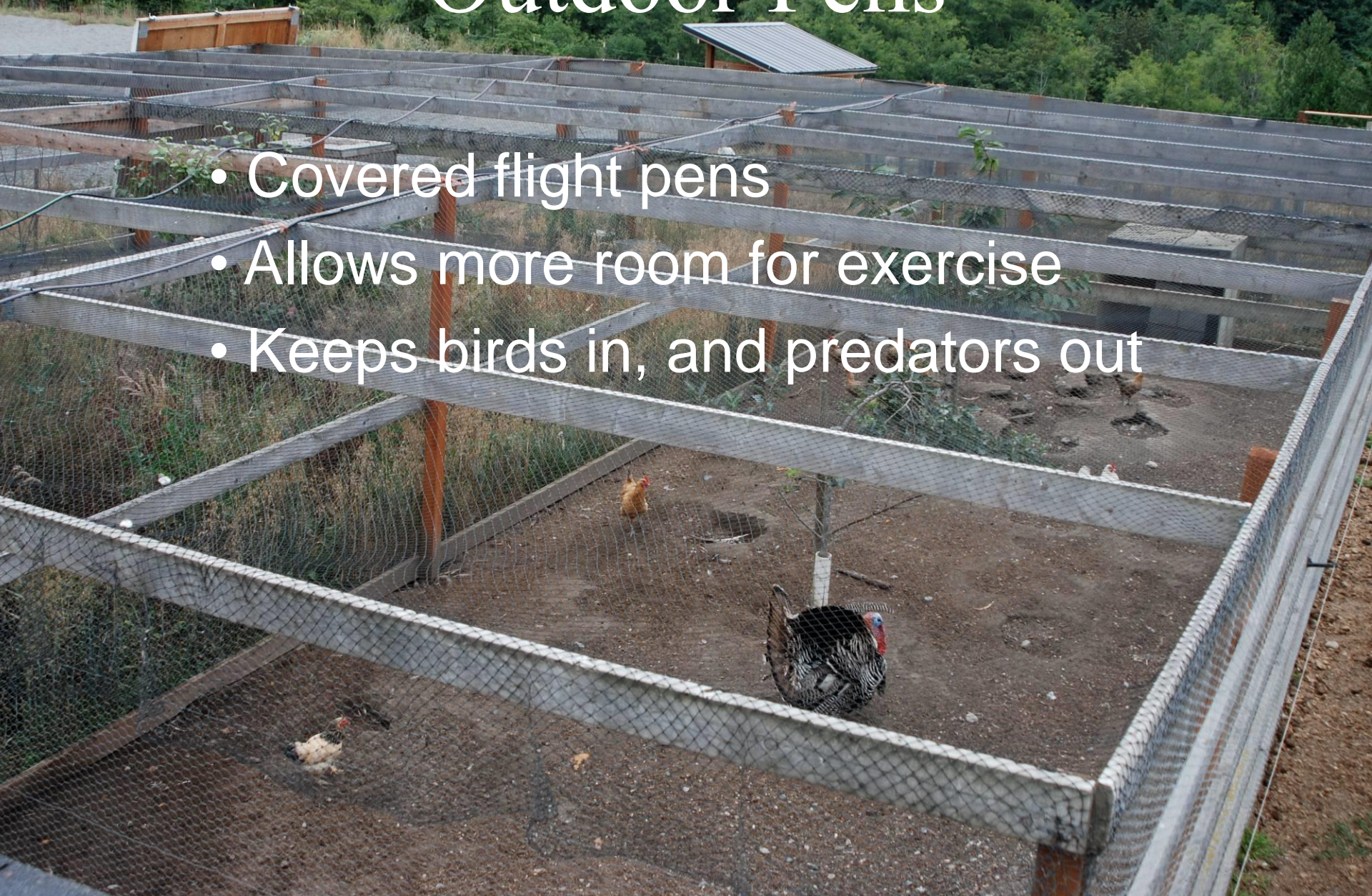
- Movable hen house on skids
- Nest boxes with outside access





# Outdoor Pens

- Covered flight pens
- Allows more room for exercise
- Keeps birds in, and predators out





# Free Ranging

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- Free ranging can reduce feed costs
  - Birds can eat plant parasites and weeds
  - Birds are happier and healthier
  - Be sure to protect birds at night



Provide roosts for birds to escape  
predators at night





# Biosecurity

- Keep facilities clean
- Minimize contact with other birds
- Keep poultry dusts and sprays on hand
- Check your birds regularly for parasites
- Remove sick birds from the flock



# Butchering

A whole roasted turkey is positioned on a light-colored wooden cutting board. The turkey's skin is a golden-brown color, and its legs are spread out to the sides. The background is a dark, out-of-focus surface.

- Butcher commercial turkeys at 2 to 3 months of age
- Butcher heritage turkeys at 6 to 7 months of age
- Do not feed for 12 hours before butchering



# Breeding

- Feed laying turkey hens layer feed
- Provide clean nest boxes



Commercial  
turkeys  
require  
artificial  
insemination









# Keys to Breeding Success

- Hatch many more individuals than you need
- Cull heavily
- Breed to the Standard



# Natural Vs Artificial Incubation

- Natural Incubation
  - Less work, higher hatch rate
  - Lower numbers of chicks per year
  - Hens stop laying
- Artificial Incubation
  - More work, lower hatch rate
  - Can hatch hundreds of chicks per year
  - Hens continue laying







Enjoy Raising Turkeys!

